TITLE: Another Catastrophe: Loss of Valuable Histopathology Collections

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CONTRIBUTION NUMBER: AED-11-039

ABSTRACT
When the BP Gulf of Mexico oil spill began in April 2010 and reports of effects on marine organisms spilled into the media, immediate concerns centered on the mortalities and rescuing affected wildlife. As affected species became known, plans for a Natural Resource Damage Assessment were made, with initial counts of dead animals. What may be of more concern are sublethal and long-term impacts on many organisms, which need to be studied by histopathological examinations of tissues. Although fresh samples will be required from affected and reference sites, in many cases the organisms in some locations may have been adversely affected by local and regional changes in conditions over time and the normal condition of these organisms may only be known from archived histoslides. However, histopathology archives are facing extinction due to lack of funding. Because of their potential to aid forensic investigations, access to such collections is essential. These slides can improve our understanding of background lesions in different species, predict health risks, and train new comparative pathologists. Collections need support to maintain the histoslides and records for historical reconstructions and trend analyses, develop online-accessible databases, provide hands-on examination and study, and prevent their loss to future generations.

PURPOSE STATEMENT
Both reference and effected marine animals have been obtained throughout the years from field collection efforts, field monitoring, laboratory toxicology and exposure experiments, and referred pathology and disease cases and studies from around the world. These microslides and pathology databases represent a historical progression and record of state of marine animal health throughout the region and offer a great opportunity for the use of these data to augment materials to predict risk to marine populations into the future. Collaborations to make these materials available to researchers increase our knowledge base.

KEYWORD LIST

Histology; Histopathology; Database; Archival collections; Pathology; Marine pathology

MEETING
36th Eastern Fish Health Workshop
Special Session: The Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Environmental Health
Holiday Inn Charleston – Mt Pleasant
Mt Pleasant, South Carolina
28 March – 1 April, 2011